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RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1049

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ROME FOR TSA REP

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SUBJECT: CODEL JOHNSON VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA, JANUARY 9-12, 2008

REF: A) Pretoria 00001

B) Pretoria 00073

C) Pretoria 00080

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Infrastructure Chairman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) led a nine-member congressional delegation of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (including one member from the Energy and Commerce Committee) on a fact-finding mission to South Africa January 9-12, 2008. Post was able to organize four meetings for the morning of January 10, three of which were with ministers (Transport, Public Works, and Foreign Affairs), despite the challenges of local summer vacation and some political turmoil (Ref A). The meeting with the Transport Minister marked the strong bilateral cooperation that helped avert a potential FAA downgrade in flight safety oversight standards (Ref B). The fourth meeting was with the Director General of the Department of Water and Forestry. Ref C reported on the detailed discussion on bilateral issues and Africa policy with Minister of Foreign Affairs Dlamini-Zuma. Areas of cooperation and follow-up mutually identified in the meetings include flight safety oversight and training, law enforcement, skills development, infrastructure, water management, women's programs, stability and foreign policy in Africa, and market access-trade. In addition, the CODEL toured Robben Island in Cape Town, guided by fellow prisoner of Nelson Mandela and Robben Island Foundation CEO Ahmed (Kathy) Kathrada. The CODEL also visited the Hector Peterson Memorial and Museum of the anti-apartheid struggle in Soweto. End Summary.

"Let's Strengthen CivAir Cooperation and Training"

¶2. (SBU) Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) and seven members of the House of Representative's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure called on Minister of Transport Jeff Radebe in Pretoria on January 10, accompanied by Ambassador and staff. Radebe (also a former detainee on Robben Island) welcomed the delegation and thanked Congress for its support during the recent FAA International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) audit of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), which reaffirmed its Category One status (Ref B). The delegation discussed strengthening

bilateral relations and increasing cooperation in the transportation sector. Radebe identified training and policy development as potential areas for increased cooperation with the United States. He described on-going South African initiatives to prepare for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. According to Radebe, the Department of Transport (DOT) is considering projects to lower congestion and develop ports (including the Coega project, near Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape). Aviation Subcommittee Chairman Jerry Costello (D-IL) expressed pleasure at the results of the FAA audit. Costello described the results of the FAA audit as a move in a positive direction for South Africa and mentioned the technical assistance provided by the FAA. Both Radebe and Ambassador recognized the strong cooperative relationship between the Embassy and the South African DOT. The new SACAA CEO/Commissioner Colin Jordaan also joined the meeting and had the opportunity to discuss the SACAA's action plan with Representative Costello (Ref B).

"Universal Water Access by 2014"

¶3. (SBU) Department of Water and Forestry Director General Rampedi Moshibidi presented an overview of South Africa's water policy, which is focused on managing scarce water resources and assuring access to water for all its citizens. Moshibidi said South Africa would achieve the Millennium Development Goal of universal water access by 2014, noting that currently over 50 per cent of the population had access. Some of Moshibidi's accompanying experts presented details of South Africa's Water Resource Strategy, which seeks to ensure that water is used to support equitable and sustainable social and economic transformation and development, including provision of water services - potable water and safe sanitation - to all people, but especially the poor and previously disadvantaged. South Africa is among the top 30 dry countries in

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the world. Due to skewed rainfall distributions, South Africa transfers water from the East to industrial areas and to/from its neighbors. Regional water distribution occurs through SADC protocols. Representative Johnson expressed a desire to begin multilateral discussions on water resources and hoped to have SAG support for such efforts. Chairman Johnson thanked the Director General for the detailed presentation and expressed the desire to seek ways to cooperate and share best practices.

"South Africa Works Because of Public Works"

¶4. (SBU) Minister of Public Works Thoko Didiza and her team of deputies received the CODEL and Ambassador for a brief but cordial courtesy meeting. The Minister summarized some of the objectives of her Department, including addressing the skills gap, promoting economic development and good governance, and managing infrastructure and immovable asset needs of the government. Didiza called for greater collaboration with the USG on shared interests. Ambassador offered to have his staff follow up with meetings to identify potential areas of cooperation. The Minister expressed a desire to incorporate lessons learned from the United States on infrastructure development/implementation of public works projects. She emphasized that while the DPW was not directly involved with transportation infrastructure development for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, it was still the department responsible for regulation of this construction.

"We Need Greater Cooperation on African Issues"

¶5. (SBU) Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (ex-wife of new ANC President Jacob Zuma) and CODEL and Ambassador had a wide-ranging discussion of U.S./South Africa relations and other international issues in Pretoria's historic Union Building (More details in Ref C). Representative Johnson stressed the importance of good relations between the U.S. and South Africa, citing the

opportunity to engage in dialogue on ways to improve water quality and infrastructure in South Africa and Africa. Dlamini-Zuma warned that failure of the North-South peace agreement could lead to the break-up of Sudan. While praising UN peacekeeping in Darfur, she warned that peacekeeping could not be effective without a political settlement with buy-in from all important players. The Minister noted that Kenya's recent election was problematic, but she blamed the turmoil there on deep ethnic divisions. She commented that South Africa would follow the lead of the African Union on Kenya. South Africa wants to improve its economic relationship with China and seeks broader access to the U.S. market in order to diversify its exports.

History and Culture

¶6. (U) The CODEL was interested in learning about and paying tribute to South Africa's culture and history, especially its long anti-apartheid struggle. A highlight of the South Africa visit was Qanti-apartheid struggle. A highlight of the South Africa visit was a day-trip to Cape Town to tour Robben Island, the notorious apartheid era prison where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated. Hosted by Mandela's prison mate and Robben Island Foundation CEO Ahmed (Kathy) Kathrada, the Members visited Mandela's cell and presented a gift from the American Congress. Kathrada lauded the strong support from American civil society in South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, pointing out that the USG was unfortunately slower in providing support. The CODEL visited an equally poignant site in Soweto, the Hector Peterson Memorial, which marks the site of the death of this youth in 1976, which precipitated the student rebellion and deaths that galvanized international support for the struggle.

COMMENT - Positive Vibes

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¶7. (SBU) The timing of this CODEL just two days after the delivery of the FAA notice that South Africa would retain its Category One status created a positive environment. The reception of Minister of Transport Radebe in Washington by Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Thomas Barrett, and Acting FAA Administrator Robert Sturgell last December also created a desire to respond in kind. Finally, the vigorous efforts of the Department of Foreign Affairs, particularly Director: USA Fadl Nacerodien, helped to secure and coordinate a variety of departmental meetings and make this visit a strong positive contribution to the bilateral relationship. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sue van der Merwe later sent a note to the CODEL to check on the status of the visit just prior to its departure. Nacerodien subsequently told Economic Counselor that he would send a report to their Embassy in Washington recommending that they follow up on this visit. DOS and DOT should expect to hear from the South African Embassy in the near future. Specific areas of cooperation and follow-up mutually identified in the meetings include flight safety oversight and training, law enforcement, skills development, infrastructure, water management, women's programs, stability and foreign policy in Africa, and market access-trade.

¶8. (U) This cable was read and approved by CODEL Johnson.

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